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IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph spanning lines 4-17 on page 7, as follows:

The SMTP receiver 31 and antivirus scanner 32 are functionally separate modules. The SMTP receiver 31 operates on the contents of message header fields. The antivirus scanner 32 operates on the actual contents of the message body and any attachments, including embedded attachments. The antivirus scanner 32 retrieves each screened message from a message queue 35 for scanning using standard antivirus techniques, as are known in the art. As well, in a further embodiment, the antivirus scanner 32 works closely in conjunction with the SMTP receiver 31, which stores an infection marker, in the form of a checksum, associated with specific message content identified as containing a virus, malware or other form of bad content, such as described in commonly-assigned related U.S. Patent application Serial No. [ ]10/016,533, entitled "System And Method For Performing Efficient Computer Virus Scanning Of Transient Messages Using Checksums In A Distributed Computing Environment," filed December 10, 2001, pending, the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference.

Please amend the paragraph spanning lines 18-29 on page 7, as follows:

The antivirus scanner 32 operates in an event-based manner by processing screened messages fed into the message queue 35 by the SMTP receiver 31. The message queue 35 functions as an event-handler by creating a logical connection between the SMTP receiver 31 and antivirus scanner 32. The message queue 35 provides an intermediate store in which screened messages 38 are staged. In the described embodiment, the screened messages 38 are efficiently staged in a hierarchical message store implementing a portable message referencing scheme, such as described in commonly-assigned related U.S. Patent application Serial No. [ ]10/016,501, entitled "System And Method For Providing A Multi-Tiered Hierarchical Transient Message Store Accessed Using Multiply Hashed Unique Filenames," filed December 10, 2001, pending, the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference.